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Third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1509 (2003) of 19 September 2003, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for a period of 12 months and requested me to report every 90 days on the implementation of the Mission's mandate. The present report was prepared pursuant to that resolution and covers developments since my report of 22 March 2004 (S/2004/229).

II. Deployment of the Mission

2. During the reporting period, the deployment of troops throughout the country remained a major priority for UNMIL, in order to stabilize the country and create the security conditions necessary for the implementation of other aspects of the Mission's mandate. In late March and April, UNMIL received more troops from Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Pakistan, as well as units from the People's Republic of China and Sweden. The arrival of these troops enabled the Mission to deploy throughout Liberia, with the exception of the area along the border with Côte d'Ivoire in Grand Gedeh and Maryland Counties. A battalion from Senegal scheduled to arrive in June will be deployed in this area.

3. In April, an infantry battalion from Pakistan was deployed to Lofa County, with its headquarters in Voinjama forming Sector 2 of the Mission. With this deployment, UNMIL established a strong presence in a key area along the Guinea-Liberia border previously controlled by elements of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). In addition, the deployment enabled the Mission to establish direct liaison with Sector East of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Also in April, an infantry battalion from Bangladesh deployed to Nimba County to establish Sector 3 with a headquarters in Gbarnga. In order to ensure the widest military coverage of this county, where sporadic skirmishes between LURD and the former government forces have continued, the Bangladeshi battalion deployed two infantry companies along the Guinea-Liberia border in the towns of Ganta and Yekepa; one infantry company at Loguata on the Côte d'Ivoire-Liberia border; and the remaining two infantry companies in the interior of Nimba County, at Saniquellie and Sagleipie. In March, an infantry

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battalion from Ethiopia was deployed to Zwedru, Greenville and River Cess in Sector 4.

4. With regard to support units, the Chinese level II hospital established medical facilities in Zwedru in late April. A Chinese engineering company also established its operational base in Zwedru and deployed a platoon to River Cess for road repairs and maintenance. A Senegalese level II hospital is scheduled to arrive in the Mission in June. The Swedish mechanized infantry company, which arrived in March, reinforced the Irish battalion already in UNMIL as the Mission's quick reaction force, based in Monrovia.

5. The Mission's troop strength stood at 14,131 as at 18 May. In addition to the Senegalese infantry battalion mentioned above, an additional infantry battalion from Ethiopia is expected to arrive in the Mission in late June. This will bring the Mission's troop level to its full authorized strength of 15,000.

6. As at 18 May, the strength of the UNMIL civilian police component stood at 720 personnel, comprising 481 civilian police officers and two formed police units with a combined strength of 239 personnel from Jordan and Nepal. A third formed police unit is scheduled to be deployed in June. UNMIL has requested the deployment of a fourth unit, and consultations with the concerned police-contributing countries are under way. The number of female United Nations civilian police personnel is currently 32, representing 5 per cent of the total civilian police strength; efforts to improve the gender balance of United Nations civilian police are continuing. It is expected that the civilian police component of UNMIL will attain its full strength of 1,115 personnel in July 2004.

7. The deployment of the Mission's civilian police personnel has gradually expanded to areas beyond Monrovia, including Roberts International Airport, Buchanan, Gbarnga, Tubmanburg and Zwedru. The deployments will continue to expand at two-week intervals into Kakata, Ganta, Saniquellie, Salala, Totota, River Cess, Greenville, Robertsport, Bo, Tienne, Sinje, Voinjama, Zorzor, Salayea, Gbarpa, Tapeta, Barclayville, Kongo, Bopolu, Kolahun, Harper, Fish Town, Pyne Town, Grand Cess, Juazohn, Plibo, Sagleipie, Harbel and Careysburg.

III. Security situation and implementation of the ceasefire

8. The ceasefire established pursuant to the 17 June 2003 Ceasefire Agreement is largely holding. Following the deployment of UNMIL troops in all counties, no major skirmishes have been reported between the armed groups. However, the security situation remains fragile, mainly because the disarmament process is yet to be completed. In addition, intra-faction disputes, particularly within LURD, continued to create tension and at times resulted in shooting incidents in some areas. Furthermore, although a National Transitional Government of Liberia programme for distributing food to combatants who are awaiting disarmament has helped to reduce incidents of looting and harassment of civilians by combatants foraging for food, several looting incidents were reported, and combatants in some areas continued to erect checkpoints, which have been routinely removed by UNMIL patrols.

9. However, serious disturbances broke out in Tubmanburg on 30 March, when LURD combatants shot randomly in the air following a dispute between factional

supporters of the group's Chairman, Sekou Damate Conneh, and followers of his estranged wife, Aisha Keita Conneh. UNMIL intervened to contain the incident. On 8 and 9 April, several LURD combatants in Gbarnga fired shots during a reported internal leadership dispute. Some of the combatants set up a checkpoint and threatened UNMIL troops who had gone to the scene to bring the incident under control and dismantle the checkpoint. An exchange of fire with the UNMIL troops ensued, during which one of the combatants was shot and later died from his injuries. A similar incident occurred in Gbarnga on 11 April, and UNMIL troops opened fire when threatened by the LURD combatants. No casualties were reported.

10. On 10 April an intra-LURD dispute between local fighters at Robertsport and LURD combatants from Monrovia escalated into a shootout that ended when UNMIL troops intervened. Yet another disturbance related to internal disputes within LURD occurred on 14 April, when a large group of combatants gathered at Roberts International Airport near Monrovia to welcome Chairman Conneh. All these incidents were reportedly related to the leadership struggles within LURD, which were explained in my previous report (S/2004/229).

11. At the same time, criminal activities carried out by elements of the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) were reported in Buchanan. On 20 March, armed MODEL elements fired gunshots into the air and looted a number of shops and houses in the city. A confrontation between locals and MODEL combatants ensued, during which one person was killed. Over 30 MODEL combatants, including one who threw a grenade, were arrested by UNMIL, and 25 of them were taken to Monrovia, where they appeared in court.

12. In Monrovia, the security situation has continued to improve, mainly as a result of the presence of United Nations troops and the collaborative activities of UNMIL civilian police and the Liberian National Police. Under operation Restore Rule of Law, the two organizations have conducted robust joint patrols that tour the streets of Monrovia 24 hours a day. The transition from lawlessness to rule of law in the capital is now steadily taking place. However, some segments of society, in particular students, have resorted to violent demonstrations in making their demands known. Such incidents occurred on 2 and 7 April, when students from the University of Liberia took to the streets to protest the delay in the reopening of the University and to demand a reduction in tuition fees when the University reopens on 31 May. On both occasions, the demonstrations ended following the intervention of UNMIL formed police units along with Liberian National Police. At the request of the United States Embassy, on 22 April UNMIL formed police units intervened to remove some 60 locally recruited personnel who had gone on strike for higher wages and had barricaded themselves in the Embassy compound.

IV. Monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

13. The three mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, namely, the Joint Monitoring Committee, the Implementation Monitoring Committee and the International Contact Group on Liberia, continued to meet regularly during the reporting period. The Joint Monitoring Committee, which is chaired by the UNMIL Force Commander, held five meetings to assess compliance by the armed groups with the ceasefire. The

Committee noted that while fighting among these groups had almost completely ended, intra-faction disputes and criminal activities remained a serious threat to security, as described in section III above. The Committee also continued to serve as a useful forum for assessing the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme and for collecting information from the armed factions on the lists and locations of their combatants, as well as their military equipment. In this regard, the factions have been slow to provide the required information.

14. The Implementation Monitoring Committee, which is chaired by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held its third meeting on 27 April, during which it reviewed the progress made in implementing the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme and the UNMIL strategy for the restructuring and training of the Liberian National Police. The Committee reiterated its continued support for future reintegration programmes.

15. The International Contact Group on Liberia has collaborated closely with UNMIL to ensure that the peace process remains on track. In this regard, it continues to meet regularly in Monrovia. On 16 April, a special session of the National Transitional Legislative Assembly received a visiting delegation of the Contact Group, including its co-Chairmen (the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo, and the Special Representative of the Presidency of the European Union to the Mano River Union region, Hans Dahlgren, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Sweden). In their message to the Legislative Assembly, the co-Chairmen stressed the need for transparency, cooperation and progress in preparing for the 2005 elections. The Contact Group also met in London on 11 May to assess the progress made in the Liberian peace process. The meeting welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the Peace Agreement since its previous meeting in February and complimented UNMIL and its partners for the successful relaunching of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme. On the elections, the Contact Group stressed that the electoral process should be owned and led by the Liberians with well-harmonized support from the international community. Furthermore, the meeting recognized the necessity of a subregional approach for resolving many of the issues at hand and, to this end, proposed that the mandate of the Contact Group be expanded to cover not only Liberia, but also wider subregional issues.

16. In all the assessments made by the monitoring mechanisms, it was noted that both the National Transitional Government of Liberia and the National Transitional Legislative Assembly are making sincere efforts to discharge their statutory responsibilities. The major issue of appointments to the Transitional Government, which had hitherto strained relations between Chairman Bryant and the armed factions and made it difficult for the Transitional Government to function smoothly, has been largely resolved. The ECOWAS chief mediator, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, visited Monrovia in April and facilitated a rapprochement between Chairman Bryant and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and the latter began the process of confirming nominees to the 81 assistant ministerial and other executive positions in the Transitional Government, which had previously been an issue of dispute. The 21-member Cabinet of the Transitional Government was formally sworn in on 23 March and has since met regularly. However, two seats in the Legislative Assembly remain vacant because of ongoing disagreements among the relevant stakeholders in Grand Kru County and the All Liberian Coalition Party.

V. The disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme

17. With the progress made in deploying troops throughout the country, and following an intensive public-information programme, UNMIL successfully re-launched the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme on 15 April at a cantonment site in Gbarnga for LURD combatants. Subsequently, further cantonment camps were opened, on 20 April in Buchanan (for MODEL), on 25 April in Tubmanburg (for LURD) and on 30 April at a site named "Voice of America", near Monrovia (for former government forces). Disarmament also commenced for ex-Government of Liberia militias at Kakata on 6 May and in the Buchanan cantonment site initially used for MODEL combatants on 7 May. The disarmament process has proceeded without major problems at all these sites. However, on 17 May, a group of armed ex-Government of Liberia combatants gathered in the centre of Monrovia demanding to be transported to a cantonment site to be disarmed. The combatants rioted when they were informed that they were scheduled to undergo disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration at a later stage, and during the violence one of them was killed. UNMIL troops and civilian police quickly intervened to prevent the situation from escalating.

18. As at 18 May, a total of 17,485 combatants had been disarmed since 15 April. These include 2,292 women, 1,561 boys and 352 girls. Some 5,689 weapons were surrendered (mainly rifles and semi-automatic machine guns), together with an estimated 930,806 rounds of small arms ammunition and 7,667 pieces of unexploded ordnance (including rocket-propelled grenades, mortar shells and hand grenades). Overall, since December 2003, a total of 30,975 combatants have been disarmed, representing about 58 per cent of the anticipated caseload of 53,000. Some 14,368 weapons have been surrendered, together with an estimated 3,648,474 rounds of small arms ammunition and 10,317 pieces of unexploded ordnance.

19. The overall number of weapons has been lower than expected, although combatants have surrendered significant quantities of ammunition. There are worrying signs that some of the heavy weapons are not being turned in during the disarmament exercise and, in several instances, have been smuggled across the borders of Liberia. In this regard, UNMIL found a cache of 81-millimetre and 61-millimetre mortar grenades and several 107-millimetre BM-21 missiles at Camp Alpha in Lofa County. On 3 May, the Swedish explosive ordnance disposal team from UNMIL force headquarters visited the camp to destroy the munitions.

20. By the end of April, UNMIL had registered 82 foreign combatants, including 11 from Côte d'Ivoire, 1 from Ghana, 59 from Guinea and 11 from Sierra Leone. However, it is believed that the number of foreign combatants who have been disarmed since December 2003 is actually much greater than that. As the disarmament and demobilization process continues and cantonment sites are established closer to border areas, it is expected that increasing numbers of non-Liberian combatants will be identified.

21. The modalities are being finalized for the voluntary reintegration and repatriation of the foreign combatants in their respective countries of origin, with particular attention to the special needs of women and children associated with the fighting forces. A small working group comprising representatives of UNMIL, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Office of the United Nations

High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has developed a framework outlining the major aspects of these arrangements. This framework includes the ongoing family tracing and reunification activities, which UNICEF, ICRC and child-protection agencies are carrying out in the subregion. Discussions have also been held with the United Nations country team in Guinea, my Special Representative for Sierra Leone, the UNDP Resident Representative in Côte d'Ivoire and national authorities in Sierra Leone on arrangements for the reintegration of repatriated combatants.

22. With the disarmament and demobilization components of the programme now firmly on track, UNMIL and other concerned partners are focusing on the reintegration aspects of the programme. In collaboration with the National Transitional Government of Liberia, United Nations agencies, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union, non-governmental organizations and other partners, short-term "bridging programmes" have been devised to absorb the demobilized combatants pending the availability of a long-term reintegration programme. In this context, UNICEF is developing long-term capacity-building programmes for child ex-combatants, most of which will focus on education, skills development, apprenticeships and community-based support. UNDP is also finalizing a strategic framework for the reintegration of ex-combatants for a targeted caseload of 22,900, to be funded under its Trust Fund established for this purpose, for which $13 million out of a required $16 million has been received. However, only $4 million remains available, and additional resources are urgently required. As UNHCR embarks on the repatriation and reintegration of the expected 150,000 returning refugees and 100,000 internally displaced persons this year, it will include ex-combatants in its reintegration projects to be implemented at the returnee-community level. USAID is providing $47.9 million for bridging programmes for an expected caseload of about 10,000 ex-combatants and 10,000 people from peri-urban and rural communities. In addition, the European Union will fund the targeted reintegration of about 2,000 ex-combatants, while Japan has earmarked $3.64 million for the reintegration of child ex-combatants.

VI. Support for security sector reform and the rule of law

23. The registration of Liberian law enforcement personnel is proceeding on schedule. As at 1 May, 3,492 members of the Liberian National Police had been registered, including 1,252 from the former Special Security Service, 171 members of the Monrovia City Police, 494 members of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and 201 members of other agencies. It is envisaged that the registration process will be completed by September 2004. So far, UNMIL has trained 530 Liberian National Police officers who have met the basic eligibility requirements and will serve as the Liberia National Police for an interim period. The UNMIL gender component has provided intensive training since January 2004 for these interim police officers, aimed at raising awareness in respect of gender, gender-based violence and gender issues in policing.

24. A major project to rehabilitate the police station at Bushrod Island in Monrovia was successfully completed in April. The station is staffed by interim police officers, who are complemented by UNMIL civilian police advisers. In support of the interim training for Liberian police personnel at Roberts International Airport,

the Government of Sweden has donated equipment to assist in the proper examination of passports.

25. In order to ensure a holistic approach in supporting the reform of Liberia's security sector, a Rule of Law Implementation Committee has been established to coordinate the reform of the police, the judiciary and correctional institutions. The Committee — which is chaired by the Deputy Special Representative for Rule of Law and comprises the Minister of Justice, the National Security Adviser, a representative of the Chief Justice, the Director of the Liberian National Police and representatives of the UNMIL civilian police, corrections, judiciary and human rights components — is currently formulating the strategy for the reform and restructuring of the police force, which has been renamed the Liberian Police Service. The Committee has finalized the eligibility criteria for recruitment into the Liberian Police Service.

26. UNMIL civilian police officers have also launched a sensitization drive for recruitment into the new force, with emphasis on the need for ethnic and gender balance. The National Transitional Government of Liberia and UNMIL launched the recruitment process on 5 May. Current members of the Liberian National Police will not be automatically recruited into the new service; they will have to meet the newly established criteria. Selected candidates will enter a three-month training programme at the Liberian Police Service Training Centre, which is scheduled to begin on 1 July. This will be followed by a six-month on-the-job training programme, after which the recruits will return to the Academy for final testing.

27. UNMIL is also working in partnership with the Ministries of Justice, Health and Education in order to implement proper medical screening and ascertain the educational qualifications of the candidates. It is hoped that funding will be forthcoming for the rehabilitation and expansion of the capacity of the Police Service Training Centre. With donor support, UNMIL expects to increase the very limited capacity at the site of the previous Liberian Police Academy, from fewer than 100 to 600 recruits per session. This would allow the training of some 1,800 officers for the Liberian Police Service before the national elections scheduled for October 2005.

28. With regard to the judiciary, UNMIL has continued to work closely with interested international partners, officials from other United Nations agencies and national legal professionals from the judiciary, the Ministry of Justice, the Defence Bar and civil society in order to constructively address the tremendous problems facing the legal and judicial system. In this regard, efforts have been made to secure funding through the UNMIL quick-impact project programme to commence small-scale but essential rehabilitation work on the infrastructure of the Temple of Justice in Monrovia. UNMIL has also started its monitoring, advisory and training programmes. Beginning with Monrovia, the institutional advisers and monitors are now being co-located in the relevant rule-of-law institutions to enable UNMIL to track progress and make appropriate recommendations. Furthermore, UNMIL continues to work closely with the Chief Justice to coordinate plans for the opening of circuit and magistrates courts after the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration exercise is complete and the counties are declared secure. In this regard, judges have already been vetted and 17 courts (criminal, civil and specialized) have been reconstituted, mainly in Monrovia and its environs, with the exception of one circuit court in Kakata.

29. The UNMIL corrections component continues to work with the Ministry of Justice and local and international non-governmental organizations on the development of the correctional system in Liberia. Monrovia Central Prison opened on 24 March, with 19 cells refurbished by ICRC. While it is far from being an ideal facility, the opening was intended to relieve some of the crowding at police holding cells in Monrovia. Unfortunately, with the opening of the prison came a significant number of new detainees. There are currently only four functioning prisons in Liberia: Monrovia Central, Bondiway, Kakata Central and Saniquellie. Each is still substandard and understaffed. Police holding cells continue to be used to house court detainees where no prison exists. Policies are in place requiring the separation of women and children; however, separate facilities for these groups do not exist. The National Transitional Government of Liberia continues to struggle with the provision of food, medical care and transport of prisoners. Temporary assistance provided by international agencies has helped to provide care for prisoners. Forty-five staff have been trained as interim correctional officers. This number is insufficient, but individuals are unwilling to work for the current government salaries. Work has also commenced on a penal reform development plan.

30. With regard to the restructuring of the armed forces, discussions are ongoing between the United States Government, which is taking the lead on this important task, and the National Transitional Government of Liberia on key issues, including the criteria for recruitment and the anticipated size of a restructured army. In addition, during a visit to Monrovia on 8 May, the Chief of Defence Staff of Nigeria indicated his country's readiness to consider assistance in training military personnel for the restructured Liberian army, if so requested by the Liberian authorities.

VII. Public information

31. The public information component of the Mission has continued to play a vital role in disseminating information on the peace process through radio and community outreach, utilizing traditional means of communication, theatre and comedy, and collaboration with the local and international media. The public information campaign to educate the Liberian public and combatants about the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme has focused on communicating key information on the resumption of the disarmament and demobilization process and the provision of daily updates on progress achieved. Its wide dissemination of information on the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme has contributed to a smooth evolution of the process. UNMIL has also begun an outreach campaign relating to the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants, focusing on the need for community acceptance and reconciliation. Capacity-building and training workshops for local journalists, which are in the final planning stages, should also strengthen the UNMIL partnership with the media. UNMIL Radio has significantly boosted the public's knowledge of all aspects of the peace process. With the recent arrival of transmitter equipment, UNMIL Radio's broadcasts will be extended throughout the country.

VIII. Restoration of State authority throughout the country

32. UNMIL has continued to work closely with relevant national authorities to formulate and execute a comprehensive strategy for the return of government officials to their areas of authority. It should be noted that even in areas where the former Government of Liberia was in control, civil authority and administration were lacking due to a number of factors. Besides security concerns, officials continue to lack basic facilities and the resources to rehabilitate or reconstruct public facilities. In Monrovia, most government ministries still lack the basic equipment and logistics support necessary to effectively carry out their assigned functions.

33. With the support and encouragement of the civil affairs component of UNMIL, the Minister of Internal Affairs established a task force for the restoration of civil authority to formulate a phased and gradual deployment of government officials to all counties. To date, superintendents have been deployed to Bong, Margibi, Montserrado, Grand Bassa and Nimba counties. Plans for deployment to the counties where UNMIL has begun the disarmament of combatants are at an advanced stage. However, two major problems stand in the way of this programme: disputes between local authorities appointed by the armed factions and the devastated state of facilities and infrastructure. Regarding the former, civil affairs officers have often intervened to ensure that such disputes are resolved amicably. In the latter case, it has been agreed with the Ministry that a needs-assessment mission involving UNMIL, UNDP, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other partners should, as a matter of priority, be fielded to take stock of infrastructure at the county level.

34. Since early April, UNMIL has begun to deploy civil affairs officers in various parts of the country, including to the four sector headquarters in Tubmanburg, Buchanan, Zwedru and Monrovia, as well as in Robertsport, Bensonville, Kakata, Tapeta, Greenville, Gbarnga, Sinje and Voinjama. They have initiated contacts with existing local and traditional authorities and other groups on the ground. Civil affairs officers would also be assigned the task of providing assistance to the National Transitional Government of Liberia and other relevant agencies handling the implementation of projects for the reintegration of ex-combatants, internally displaced persons and returnees in their communities.

35. In its resolution 1509 (2003), the Security Council mandated UNMIL to assist the National Transitional Government of Liberia in restoring proper administration of natural resources. UNMIL has continued to monitor progress made by the Government to put in place mechanisms to ensure the proper management of two key natural resource industries, namely, diamonds and timber, which are subject to United Nations sanctions. In this regard, on 23 November 2003, as part of its commitment to achieve the goals set out in paragraphs 5, 7 and 11 of Security Council resolution 1521 (2003) of 22 December 2003, the National Transitional Government of Liberia set up a task force on sanctions, which consists of a Timber Sanctions Review Committee and a Diamond Sanctions Review Committee. Progress made in this area is described in my report S/2004/428 of 26 May 2004.

IX. Elections

36. Article XVIII of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (see S/2003/850) provides that "the National Elections Commission (NEC) shall be reconstituted and shall be independent". Article XIX of the Agreement determines that elections shall be held not later than October 2005 and requests "the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS and other members of the international community, as appropriate, to jointly conduct, monitor and supervise the next elections in the country". It further calls for a re-demarcation of constituencies and states that "voter education and registration ... shall be organized by the newly reconstituted NEC, in collaboration with other national and international organizations under the supervision of the United Nations". Assistance will be needed to enable refugees currently in neighbouring countries who may wish to participate in the elections, as well as internally displaced persons currently in camps, to return to their places of origin in time to take part in the elections. In collaboration with the Government of Liberia and countries of asylum, UNHCR has drawn up a voluntary repatriation operations plan that is expected to commence in October 2004.

37. In April, the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs sent an assessment mission to Liberia to develop proposals on the role that the United Nations could play in supporting the electoral process, in cooperation with other stakeholders such as ECOWAS, the African Union, the European Union and the International Contact Group on Liberia, as envisaged in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The assessment team was also to formulate proposals for the reform of the electoral system (including the legal framework), formulate a possible time line of activities and assess existing activities. The mission was carried out at the same time as electoral assessment visits by the European Commission and a joint USAID/International Foundation for Election Systems team. The assessment mission concluded that the National Elections Commission, as presently reconstituted, has very little material and staff capacity to carry out civic and voter education, voter registration, constituency delimitation and polling. It stressed that without extensive international assistance, these activities cannot be carried out on schedule. The mission recommended that a meeting be held as soon as possible involving all signatories of the Agreement to clarify these issues so that the Commission can start preparations for the October 2005 elections.

38. The expected United Nations role in the elections will require 32 international posts, 11 national Professional posts, 49 national General Service staff for one year in the UNMIL electoral unit and 92 national General Service staff to work in the Unit's data centre for five months. In addition, 220 United Nations Volunteers will be hired for periods ranging from six to nine months. Moreover, it will be necessary to recruit 4,080 temporary registration staff for six months. To jump-start the process, registration material and some funding for voter education will also be included in the UNMIL budget. However, salaries and equipment needs for members of the National Elections Commission and their support staff will have to be covered through other means.

39. In providing support for the electoral process in Liberia, UNMIL will be guided by two key objectives: (a) to assist the conduct of credible elections with all necessary expertise and (b) to leave behind a Liberian election management body that will rely less on international assistance for elections following those scheduled for October 2005.

X. Human rights and protection of civilians

40. The human rights and protection component of UNMIL has continued its monitoring and reporting in all areas of the country where State authority has been established. During the period under review, the component has worked closely with the Ministry of Justice to resolve the long-standing problem of overcrowding in prisons and police holding cells in Monrovia. On the request of the human rights and protection component, the USAID Office of Transitional Initiatives has agreed to fund a team of Liberian human rights lawyers to take up, on a pro bono basis, the cases on behalf of persons currently in holding cells awaiting the adjudication of their cases. Acting in collaboration with the UNMIL corrections component, human rights officers have participated in the training of a group of corrections officers at Monrovia Central Prison.

41. As part of its ongoing efforts to support transitional justice mechanisms in the country, UNMIL has also worked with a Liberian umbrella group called the Transitional Justice Working Group. In addition, my Special Representative, Jacques Paul Klein, wrote to Chairman Bryant requesting his intervention to ensure the early passage of the enabling laws specifying the duties, powers and jurisdiction (temporal and geographical) of the Independent National Human Rights Commission and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Furthermore, my Special Representative also urged the Chairman to complete the process of ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (and its First Optional Protocol), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. In addition, UNMIL has sent reminders to the Government regarding a draft human rights declaration, which was forwarded for its consideration on 29 October 2003. That declaration proposes guidelines, benchmarks and priorities for collaborative national action in the field of human rights.

42. With regard to human rights training, UNMIL has also developed a strategy for the integration of human rights in school curricula, as well as a teachers' human rights sensitization syllabus. The human rights and protection component is working on the establishment of a human rights training and resource centre. The Office of Transitional Initiatives will provide equipment, and UNMIL and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will provide human rights books and other reference materials for the centre. In addition, UNMIL has participated in a human rights sensitization training workshop for community leaders. It also designed a training programme in human rights for law enforcement agencies. In order to encourage international advocacy in response to the human rights needs of Liberia, the Independent Expert of the Commission on Human Rights will undertake a mission to Liberia from 23 May to 13 June 2004.

XI. Humanitarian situation

43. The relative stability in recent months, coupled with the resumption of the disarmament process, has improved the humanitarian situation and facilitated access for agencies to previously inaccessible areas. However, living conditions in urban communities are still characterized by overcrowding and a general lack of public services. The influx of significant numbers of internally displaced persons has forced thousands not only into camps for the displaced where basic services are

available, but also into communal living, in which there is a considerable risk of exposure to epidemic diseases. Most primary and secondary schools are also operating, especially in urban areas, garbage is being collected and overland transport along the major roads is becoming increasingly more secure.

44. The United Nations country team in Liberia is working to ensure a well-coordinated and coherent response to the humanitarian needs of Liberia. The Humanitarian Aid Coordination Forum, chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator, continues to provide strategic direction and substantive guidance to the humanitarian community. Sectoral working groups, with the participation of local and international non-governmental organizations and other partners on refugees, repatriation and reintegration, shelter and non-food items, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, protection, food security, disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration, education, logistics and public information are in place to respond to the various challenges being faced. The Humanitarian Information Centre has also contributed immensely to strengthening the information management capacity of the humanitarian community. The Humanitarian Operations Centre was launched in November 2003 to consolidate all common services aimed at facilitating the effective delivery of assistance, including in respect of security, civil-military coordination, logistics, communications and information, and it continues to render critical operational support to national and international humanitarian actors.

45. The resumption of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration process has brought an easing of the security restrictions that until now have hampered the deployment of United Nations staff outside of Monrovia. The United Nations security phases have been lowered from level 5 to level 4 in 10 of Liberia's 15 counties, allowing UNMIL and a number of the United Nations agencies to begin deploying staff in the field. These include UNHCR (in Sagleipie, Gbarnga, Tubmanburg and Zwedru, and to cover its work in Voinjama, Harper and Gbarpolu, from those locations), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (in Gbarnga and Zwedru) and the World Food Programme (WFP) (in Gbarnga).

46. With regard to the situation of internally displaced persons and returnees, there are an estimated 300,000 internally displaced persons in camps, this number having increased recently as a result of spontaneous returns of Liberians from neighbouring countries. Such returns have been ongoing, with an estimated 80,000 already returned to various home communities in the country. Recently, 239 Liberians stranded in Mali were airlifted home by UNMIL with assistance from UNAMSIL in support of UNHCR. It should be noted, however, that this current piecemeal approach is not being encouraged, and UNMIL is working, in collaboration with UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in support of a broad and organized process of return.

47. The deployment of UNMIL peacekeeping troops along the border between Sierra Leone and Liberia has enabled UNHCR to resume the land repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees. More than 3,500 refugees have been assisted since January 2004. Large-scale operations for the return of refugees are unlikely to begin before October 2004, when the rains are expected to subside, thus making transport and agricultural activity easier. In the meantime, UNHCR and ICRC have begun replacing thousands of damaged and low-quality tarpaulins in some of the camps,

and the Norwegian Refugee Council is currently carrying out a survey to best target those most in need of such support.

48. Efforts are also continuing to enhance inter-agency cooperation in Liberia. In this context, WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR and UNDP have taken steps to integrate their school-based rehabilitation activities. WFP will carry out school feeding programmes, UNICEF will identify and address water and sanitation needs and UNDP will provide assistance through school-focused rehabilitation projects that emphasize community participation, while UNHCR is providing transportation to displaced teachers for their return to accessible places of origin. Since the start of the year, primary health-care centres in a number of counties have been revitalized. Additionally, the national immunization programme has been restarted with the help of UNICEF and other partners, resulting in 1,233,000 children being immunized against measles since June 2003. UNICEF is also working closely with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, WFP and non-governmental organization partners to support 15 supplementary feeding centres and 4 therapeutic feeding centres benefiting up to 10,000 people.

49. UNICEF is currently developing plans and programmes for vulnerable communities and groups, including women and children in armed conflict. The agency is also coordinating and supervising, in collaboration with UNHCR, child-protection programmes and activities with international and national non-governmental organizations. Similarly, UNDP has provided capacity-building support to human rights non-governmental organizations, humanitarian workers, government employees and ex-combatants on human rights issues. Awareness-raising is also continuing through the Protection Core Group, and a study on sexual and gender-based violence is to be finalized by the end of May.

50. The United Nations country team completed the mid-year review of the 2004 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal at the beginning of May. The review document will be presented to donors in early June. Only about 30 per cent of the $137 million requested for the non-food component of this year's Appeal has been provided. I strongly urge donors to make every effort to close this funding gap so that key humanitarian priorities can be met in a timely manner. Over the next six months, and if provided with adequate resources, agencies will extend humanitarian assistance and improve social services in previously inaccessible areas; intensify support for the return, reintegration and resettlement of internally displaced persons, refugees, ex-combatants and host communities; and continue to assist those internally displaced persons who live in camps and are not yet able to return home.

XII. National recovery

51. Since the International Reconstruction Conference for Liberia, held on 5 and 6 February, the National Transitional Government of Liberia, in conjunction with UNMIL, the World Bank, UNDP and other partners, has taken several significant steps to implement the results-focused transitional framework programme that was presented to the donors. In that regard, the priority was to establish the framework and mechanism through which the programme will be implemented. An Implementation and Monitoring Committee for the results-focused transitional framework has been established, headed by Chairman Bryant, with members drawn from the National Transitional Government of Liberia, UNMIL, the World Bank,

UNDP and other relevant stakeholders. The Committee's Support Office is tasked with day-to-day responsibilities for all activities under the framework and is based in the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs. The Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs is the Secretary of the Committee. The Support Office will be co-financed by the National Transitional Government of Liberia and its development partners. Additionally, working committees have been established for the nine clusters outlined in the framework. As at 12 May, approximately $70 million had been received out of the $520 million pledged in New York in February for the two-year transitional period. The Committee is tasked with following up on letters sent by my Special Representative and Chairman Bryant in April to donors who made pledges at the Conference.

52. As part of the recovery and reconstruction effort, the UNMIL quick-impact projects unit had by mid-May allocated $1 million to 97 approved projects. Of these, 31 per cent have been completed and the rest are being implemented. Just over 50 per cent of the funding has been used for school rehabilitation, followed by other key areas, including repair of roads and administrative buildings. To further address gaps in service delivery, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has announced a $2 million emergency relief fund. Grants from the fund are intended to support emergency interventions. Only non-governmental organizations are eligible for funding, with the focus being on activities in the areas of re-establishing basic living conditions for communities hosting internally displaced persons and for vulnerable populations, water and sanitation, agricultural recovery, non-food items, shelter, public health interventions, protection and related interventions. From 10 to 14 May, a National Women's Conference for Peace and Sustainable Development was organized with support from the United Nations Development Fund for Women of UNDP, United Nations agencies and the USAID Office of Transitional Initiatives to lay out a national plan of action that builds on support for the results-based transitional framework and immediate post-transition activities while ensuring the full participation of women in the rebuilding of Liberia.

XIII. Regional aspects

53. The National Transitional Government of Liberia has continued its efforts to improve its relations with neighbouring countries. During the period under review, Chairman Bryant visited Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea to discuss bilateral issues and restore confidence between Liberia and its neighbours. He also participated in the Mano River Union summit held in Conakry on 20 May. The summit is part of efforts to reactivate the Mano River Union with the help of the United Nations, ECOWAS and the European Union.

54. Pursuant to the statement issued by the President of the Security Council on 25 March 2004 (S/PRST/2004/7) on strengthening inter-mission cooperation, including on issues such as information and resource sharing, joint patrolling and monitoring and the possibility of "hot pursuit" cross-border operations, UNMIL, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and UNAMSIL took part in a meeting on the joint utilization of United Nations resources, organized by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, in Dakar on 29 April. The three missions are developing joint plans and modalities for more effective control of borders. These plans will be shared with the countries concerned. In this regard, my Special Representatives for Liberia and Sierra Leone

met on 6 May in Monrovia, along with the Force Commanders and Civilian Police Commissioners of UNMIL and UNAMSIL, to discuss efforts to improve cross-border security and review progress in the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration exercise in Liberia. In addition, liaison officers from UNMIL force headquarters were exchanged with UNOCI and UNAMSIL to assist in enhancing regional cooperation. UNMIL Sector 2 headquarters has also established direct liaison with UNAMSIL Sector East.

55. Furthermore, as a follow-up to my report of 12 March 2004 on cross-border issues (S/2004/200), the heads of UNMIL, UNAMSIL, UNOCI and the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, together with my Special Representative for West Africa, ECOWAS and other concerned partners, held a meeting on 30 April to review the 33 recommendations outlined in that report and to discuss modalities for their implementation. The three peacekeeping missions, in coordination with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, are also developing detailed proposals on concrete action they could take in pursuing a regional approach in the implementation of their mandates. These proposals will form the basis of the recommendations I intend to submit to the Security Council later this year, as indicated in my report of 19 March 2004 on UNAMSIL (S/2004/228).

XIV. Mission support

56. On 24 April, the memorandum of understanding for the new UNMIL headquarters building in the capital that would house all components of the Mission was signed. The building will be occupied in phases by mid-July, after completion of the necessary engineering work. In the meantime, the acute shortage of office space at the current UNMIL headquarters is being addressed by constructing additional prefabricated buildings to accommodate staff.

XV. Financial aspects

57. By its resolution 58/261 of 23 December 2003, the General Assembly appropriated an amount of $564,494,300 (gross) and decided to apportion among Member States the amount of $450 million (gross) for UNMIL for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004.

58. As at 30 April 2004, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNMIL Special Account amounted to $139.3 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to $1.3 billion.

XVI. Observations

59. UNMIL continues to make steady progress in stabilizing Liberia and creating the necessary security conditions for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, as well as the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the commencement of the national recovery. The deployment of UNMIL troops throughout the country is almost complete, and the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme is now on

track. In addition, the programme for the restructuring and retraining of the country's security sector has made a good start with the establishment of an interim national police force and the launching of the selection of recruits for the new Liberian Police Service.

60. The efforts to rehabilitate the judiciary, reform the corrections system and facilitate the extension of State administration throughout Liberia are similarly making progress. In addition, the increasingly stable security situation has resulted in an improved human rights situation and facilitated wider humanitarian access. The mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which consist of the Joint Monitoring Committee, the Implementation Monitoring Committee and the International Contact Group on Liberia, are also functioning more effectively.

61. However, many daunting challenges still lie ahead. In particular, the security situation may again turn volatile until the disarmament and demobilization of combatants is completed and the programme for the longer-term, sustained reintegration of the former combatants gathers momentum. The capacity of the National Transitional Government of Liberia to deliver services and extend its authority throughout the country also remains extremely limited. Sustained efforts by the Transitional Government will be required to ensure an efficient and transparent management of the country's national resources, in order to generate the revenue that is sorely needed for the enhancement of the Government's capacity.

62. The support provided by UNMIL and other partners is primarily intended to empower the National Transitional Government of Liberia. In this connection, it is gratifying to note that the Cabinet of the National Transitional Government of Liberia is now meeting regularly and that most of the government positions have been filled. The appointment of a new National Elections Commission and the development of legislation relating to the establishment of an Independent National Human Rights Commission and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission are also encouraging developments.

63. I am pleased to note that the National Transitional Government of Liberia, together with UNMIL, aims to have a new Liberian Police Service with at least 1,800 personnel by the time national elections take place in October 2005. In this connection, I would like to appeal to Member States to provide the requisite assistance for the expansion of the capacity of the police training school in Liberia and equipment for the restructured and reformed police service, including vehicles, communication equipment and uniforms, as well as the construction of police stations across the country. I also wish to commend the United States of America for taking on the important task of leading in the provision of assistance for the restructuring and training of Liberia's armed forces, and call upon other Member States to contribute to this effort.

64. The programme for the reintegration of former combatants and the repatriation of non-Liberian combatants will equally require the generous support of the international community. Without an effective reintegration programme, the entire disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme could be seriously undermined, possibly resulting in renewed insecurity in the country. Similarly, lack of support for programmes targeting the issue of foreign combatants, particularly their repatriation and their reintegration in their countries of origin, could contribute to instability in the subregion.

65. Considering the numerous difficulties facing the electoral process, it is important that the preparations for the 2005 elections begin immediately. This would allow sufficient time to address the challenges relating to the creation of the necessary conditions for the elections and to mobilize the technical and material assistance required by the National Elections Commission. I trust that Member States and other international partners will come forward with such assistance in a timely manner.

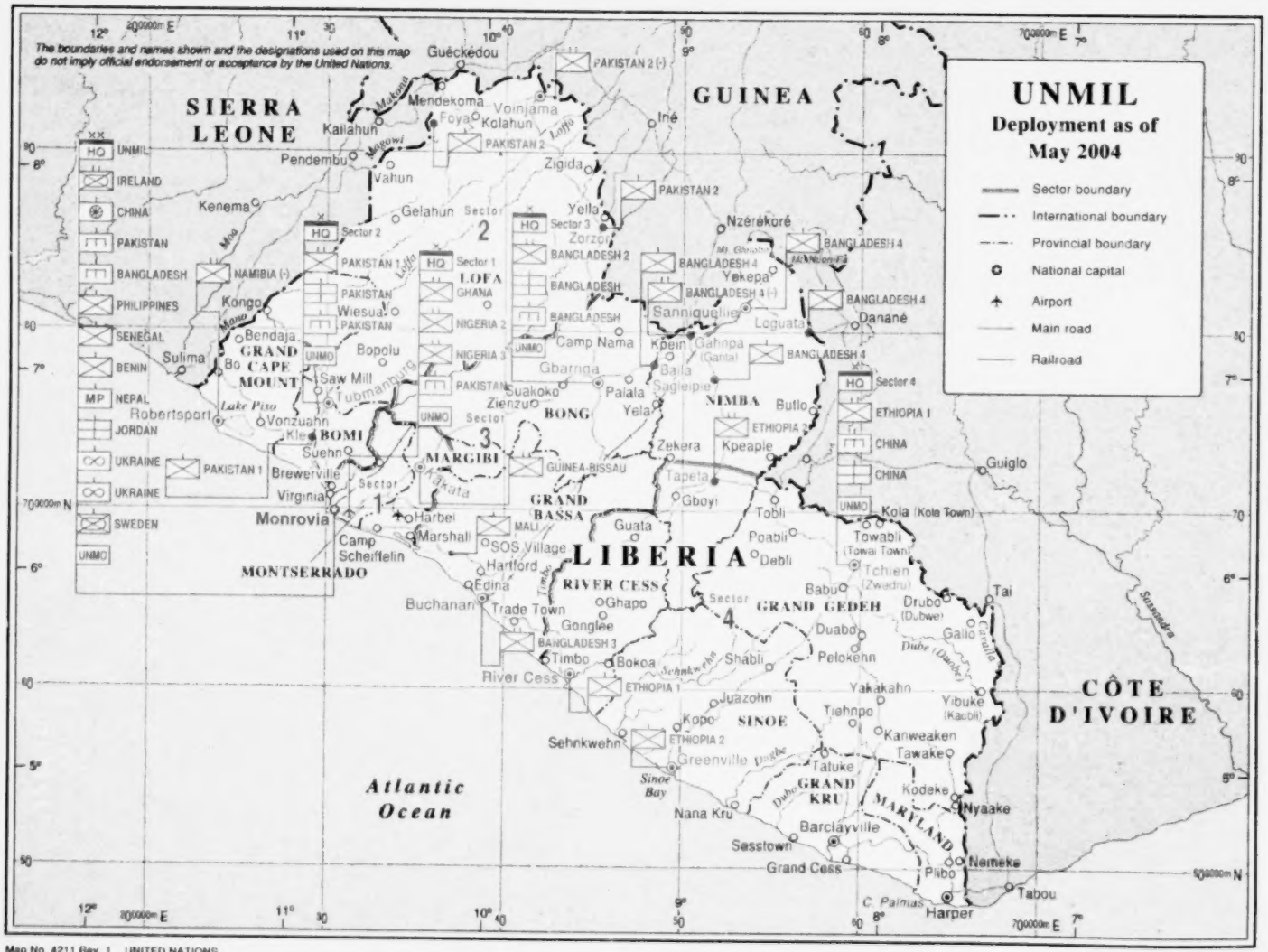
66. In conclusion, I should also like to commend my Special Representative and the civilian and military staff of UNMIL for the progress accomplished so far during the period under review. I would also like once again to express my appreciation to the countries contributing troops and police personnel to the Mission, as well as to ECOWAS leaders, members of the International Contact Group on Liberia, United Nations agencies, humanitarian organizations and numerous bilateral donors for their steadfast efforts in continuing to support the peace process in Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and civilian police strength as at 18 May 2004

	Military component				
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Civilian police*
Bangladesh	17	11	3 162	3 190	24
Benin	3	1	263	267	
Bolivia	3	1		4	
Bosnia and Herzegovina					17
Brazil		1		1	
Bulgaria					
China	5	9	558	572	5
Croatia		3		3	
Czech Republic	3			3	3
Denmark	2			2	
Ecuador	3	1		4	
El Salvador	3			3	
Ethiopia	18	8	1 795	1 821	
Egypt	3			3	
Fiji					30
Finland		2		2	
France		1		1	
Gambia			151	151	30
Ghana	6	3	449	458	32
Guinea-Bissau			650	650	
Indonesia	3			3	
Ireland		6	420	426	
Jordan	7	9	114	130	132
Kenya	3	4		7	
Kyrgyzstan				0	
Malawi		2		2	19
Mali	3	2	246	251	
Malaysia	10			10	
Namibia	3	4	844	851	6
Nepal	3	1	40	44	130
Niger	2			2	4
Nigeria	18	13	1 621	1 652	20
Norway					6
Pakistan	16	9	2 428	2 453	13
Paraguay	3	1		4	

Country	Military component				Civilian police
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	
Peru	2	3		5	
Philippines	3	2	141	146	22
Poland	2			2	3
Republic of Korea	1	1		2	
Republic of Moldova	3	1		4	
Romania	3			3	
Russian Federation	6			6	3
Samoa					18
Senegal	3	3	275	281	11
Serbia and Montenegro	3			3	8
South Africa		3		3	
Sri Lanka					11
Sweden		3	230	233	9
Togo		1	150	151	
Turkey					22
Ukraine	3	1	300	304	11
United Kingdom		3		3	
United States of America	7	4		11	74
Uruguay					2
Yemen					2
Zambia	3			3	24
Zimbabwe					29
Total	**177**	**117**	**13 837**	**14 131**	**720**



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